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NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 1986

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1986-87 FSA EXECUTIVE

President:	George McGuire
Staff Vice-President:	Linda Dix
Faculty Vice-President:	Judy Inouye
Grievance Chair:	Bob Smith
Contract Chair:	Virginia Cooke
Treasurer:	Maureen MacNie
Joint Professional Development Committee Chair:	Dave Gibson
Joint Classification Audit Committee Chair:	Richard Heyman
Communications Chair:	Paul Herman
Agreements Chair:	Scott Fast
Corresponding Secretary:	Bonnie Anderson
Recording Secretary:	Anne Andres
Past President:	Kevin Busswood

from the editor . . .

In May, two giants announced retirement from their political offices. Bill Bennett announced that he will step down as Premier by the end of the summer. FSA President Kevin Busswood did not seek re-election.

(Rumours abound that the dual retirement was well coordinated. Speculation rages that the two retirees may go off on a joint sabbatical to study socialism in Singapore, or that Busswood will make a run for the Sacred leadership.)

To Bennett, good bye and good riddance. May your retirement be haunted by the ghosts of the hundreds of thousands of people you have hurt in this province.

To Busswood, many thanks for your skillful work that has helped us survive the havoc wreaked by your fellow retiree. May you continue to loom large (metaphorically speaking, of course) in the FSA.

MacKinnon Petition

Thank you to all who signed the petition protesting the firing of psychology instructor Alan MacKinnon at Cariboo College. It has been passed on for presentation along with similar petitions from other colleges and universities. Hope it does some good.

Negotiations

It looks like we have a settlement with which we can live (but at a further decreased standard) for another year.

The Sacred strategy of restricting what we can bargain for continues to work well. The gains we can possibly make are so legally restricted that any strike would be for very small potatoes. Consequently, a strike is not typically worth it except to fight cutbacks even before inflation is taken into account.

We have had to fight the Sacreds' draconian fiats, their compliant Board appointees, and some administrators eager to do their bidding.

But we have managed to maintain some allegiance to education at Fraser Valley College and some small defence of our wages.

Credit for that very large achievement must go to our Negotiation Team of Bertha Solvey, Doug Hudson, Brian Talarico and Chair Virginia Cooke.

Thank you.

Summer Schedule

As you may have noted, this issue is for May and June. There will be another issue for July and August that should come out in early August.

So, as you bask in the sun and think great thoughts, take some time to share them with us in the next Newsletter.

Maybe we could have a special edition called "How I Spent My Summer Vacation, My Very Small or Nonexistent Wage Increase, and the Time I Did Not Have to Use Preparing a Ninth Course."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Well, not exactly to this editor. But other editors do get mail! The following appeared in The Association of Douglas & Kwantlen Faculty Association.

It is not often that an organization's newsletter will be so readable and absorbing, that I cannot put it aside to read the rest of my mail.

Your February 1986 issue, however, was just that good. Not only did I like reading it - I felt better afterwards than I had felt all week.

Thank you for your share in it, and special thanks for the "Blackboard Rainforest, 1986" by Graham Dowden.

As we do with other newsletters, so they pick up copy from ours. So, there is your ticket to literary fame: write an article for your newsletter!

NEWSLETTER EVALUATION

We did get some responses to the request for Newsletter Evaluations in the April Newsletter. Some comments:

It would be informative if the newsletter focused more on economic issues, especially other public sectors outside education, and the private sector - for comparison.

Many of the articles are 'whiney', full of complaints and excessively bitchey - most of us realize that we are much better off here at FVC than we have been in previous jobs! Certainly we must fight for ourselves, our students and the college - but it can be done with much less moaning and self-pity.

Possibly quarterly reports from some of the other Committees, i.e., Joint PD, JCAC, Occupational Health and Safety, etc.

First, thanks to those who sent in evaluations; more are certainly welcome.

Second, we are seeking subscriptions to newsletters from other unions in the province - especially public sector - and from college associations in other provinces.

Third, the heads of the committees noted above are served notice that our members want reports from them.

As to being whiney and bitchey, I suppose the surest relief from my moanings are to contribute your own.

From the President's Pen

1. Preamble

I would like to use this newsletter to do three things, to make a report about the CIEA Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at Nelson, B.C., to acquaint the membership with some personal thoughts about what I would like to accomplish as your Union President, and to address some general remarks to the College Board.

2. AGM Report

The AGM was very successful with many new acquaintances made and resolutions passed. Representing our Union was Lorraine Waller, Scott Fast, Walter Bissky, and myself (George McGuire). As the President of the FSA, I also attended three extra sessions of the Presidents' Council. The vote to form a provincial union was unanimous. BCIT was against the resolution, and therefore will be withdrawing from CIEA. The BCIT delegation was not present when this vote was held, and hence the unanimous vote. The provincial union dues will be as follows: \$348 per year for faculty as was decided at our general meeting, \$63 per year (5.25 per month) for staff strike fund fee which is a little lower than the \$5.50 staff voted on at the FSA Annual General Meeting.

The President of Alberta's Provincial Union attended the AGM as an interested observer. The Alberta faculty association is trying to form a national association for all college faculty. A discussion of this national union was not held at the AGM, but CIEA will be sending a delegate to Alberta to observe their Annual General Meeting and will report back on this proposal.

At the Friday evening session, Walter Bissky became sick and had to be taken to the hospital, and therefore could not attend the Saturday session. Walter's return home was delayed two days, but he is back now and feeling a little better. More medical tests will have to be conducted to determine the nature of his troubles. I am sure the Union membership wishes Walter well, and hopes the tests reveal no serious health problems.

3. Ramblings From Your New President

Since there was not an election for the position of President this year, I didn't get a chance to articulate or acquaint the membership with my election platform. Therefore the next part of this report is taken up with the direction I personally would like to see the Union follow in the upcoming year. The following goals and objectives are presented to initiate discussion among the membership as well as to acquaint the membership with these goals. Some of my priorities, objectives or goals are as follows:

- a. to develop and articulate some long range goals for our Union,
- b. to develop some plans to make sure the goals are accomplished,
- c. to set out methods of deciding whether these goals have been achieved, and if not, why not,
- d. to attempt to get more people involved in Union business,
- e. to try to ensure that the membership is involved in the formation and is supportive of all Union policies,
- f. to attempt to ensure that the Fraser Valley College is a good place to work and study in,
- g. to attempt to create for the students at FVC the best learning environment possible,
- h. to attempt to ensure that the students attending our College have the most dedicated and most concerned instructors humanly possible,
- i. to attempt to acquaint the public with the horrendous difficulties that our membership have labored under, and the sacrifices that our membership have made during these years of restraint,
- j. to ensure that all FSA members have the support of their Union in any grievance they have with the Board,
- k. to attempt to restore the purchasing power that our Union members had in 1976 (?? priority #1),
- l. to ensure the Union continues to function smoothly and efficiently
- m. to forcibly present, rigorously defend, and rationally argue the Union's case before the public and the College Board,
- n. to help the College Board decide procedures and formulate policies which ensure the College runs smoothly and efficiently,
- o. to attempt to maintain and foster, whenever possible, an amicable relationship between the Union and the Board.

These goals are listed to generate discussions about their relevance, applicability, acceptability, and general usefulness. Comments on any or all of the above will be appreciated, and suggestions on how they can be accomplished will be gratefully received. A strong Union can only be achieved if the membership believes in the Union's policies, understands the reasons for adopting them, and participates in their formulation. Now I am not such a Pollyanna as to think we can accomplish all of the above goals in one year, but it is important that we have such goals, and methods to evaluate our success in achieving these goals.

To check if these goals are similar to yours, or even if they meet with your approval, I would like, in the upcoming year, to hold a number of small group discussions. These small group meetings would permit a more informal discussion to take place, and they should encourage the members to present their views in a more sympathetic setting. To accomplish this, I would like to request that the faculty coordinators and the shop stewards extend to me an invitation to attend at least one of your area or faculty meetings. These meetings could also be used by the membership to request changes in Union policy, to initiate changes in policy, to question Union policy, or to get some clarifications of present Union Policy. I especially wish and encourage the staff component of our Union to to discuss with me or any other Executive member their individual or collective concerns.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of incoming Executive for their dedication and their willingness to become involved with the Union. The membership will find, somewhere in this newsletter, a list of the names of the new Executive and their respective responsibilities. Please use these people as a conduit to get your ideas, suggestions, or concerns to the attention of the Executive.

In concluding this report, I would like to reiterate my call for everyone to take an active interest in the Union. The new Executive will work hard on your behalf, but we need and expect your support. I hope that you as an individual will do all that you can do to strengthen and aid the Union in its fight for the rights of the entire membership.

4. To the College Board

I extend to the Board a invitation to work with the Union to make Fraser Valley College, a College that is the envy of all the other colleges. The Union and the Board may disagree about how to accomplish our common goals, but we should not lose sight of the fact that we have many common goals. I personally believe that the Board is sincere in their wish to provide the best education possible for the students of the Fraser Valley, and I assure the Board that the Union wishes to do the same. Accordingly, the Union extends to the Board the invitation, to struggle together, amicably and in spirit of cooperation, to solve our mutual problems. In this way the Union and Board will provide a work place free of acrimony, and the students will be the benefactors by being in a environment that is conducive for their studying and their learning.

5. Conclusion

I wish the entire membership a happy and safe summer. If you wish to contact me during the summer, I will be at home or attending to business at the College. The membership may phone me at my home (859-2189) or at the College, local 326. If you see me in my office come in, introduce yourself, and lets talk. Thank you for taking the time to read this very long report.

George McGuire
A Happy and Optimistic
President of the FSA

FINAL REPORT FROM THE CONTRACT CHAIR...

In the opening of negotiations talks this year, there was much homage paid to the fine tradition of collective bargaining, our own quiet labour history of collegiality and co-operation, and the relief felt this year because the provincial government seemed to be backing off from previous direct attacks on education. Dr. Moore wittily alluded to the annual 'mating game' of negotiations, hinting that there would be less pressure this year. All in all, I was feeling scared - after all, this was all new to me - but optimistic. We weren't looking for many changes in the contract and Erling said theirs was pretty much a 'status quo' package, so I discounted the stories of past negotiators in anticipation of a cautious courtship.

The negotiations quickly moved, however, from 'mating games' to 'war games' - all unnecessarily in my opinion. It has been said that all's fair in love and war. If this is the tradition of collective bargaining, then, to quote Hamlet, it's a 'custom more honored in the breach than the observing.' We are a labor union in a province which has the worst labor relations in the country, so if we are to go through this process annually, then the process needs some evaluation. I offer these observations.

It won't do to characterize negotiations as a 'grand game' played outside the realm of our 'real' working lives. Whether your metaphor is poker, 'hard ball' or 'war games', there's too much at stake to pretend that our working relationships aren't affected. This became readily apparent when the administration suddenly sought major timetable changes to allow for an increased workload, only to find a very angry faculty.

I confess that I may not have the proper respect for 'games' - at least the competitive ones that depend upon male egos. Most women weren't brought up on the sports tradition of elbowing ones opponent on the basketball court and slapping him on the back after the game. 'Stonewalling' and 'bluffing' aren't my style. Erling commented at one point that there's a set of rules to be followed in negotiating, and that I didn't seem to follow them. But my reply then - and now - is that there is no God of Collective Bargaining ready to penalize those who don't 'play the game'. The process is what we make it. For educated, caring people, trained to research, study and solve problems, these tactics of confronting each other instead of confronting problems seem inappropriate.

Contract Chair's Report (Contd.)

If I were forced to pick a game analagous to what I perceived in negotiations this year, it might well be the current craze, Wrestlemania, and we all know how genuine that show is. Strutting their egos, good guys and bad guys grapple in mock strangleholds, feigning victory or suffering, while the real outcomes are either predetermined or decided at the last minute when it's time for the show to be over.

Also, the 'game' isn't really a fair one in this province. College budgets are increasingly inadequate, budgets are late (and arbitrary), Peck and the CSP make a mockery of real wage bargaining, the revised Labor Code restricts and penalizes unions - especially educational unions. There are no winners in such circumstances. In this labour climate, it becomes essential to work together to maintain self-respect and mutual respect. Workers in educational institutions have little control, then, except over the manageability of their working lives and the quality of the service they render either to students or the institution. When such things are in danger of being bargained away, the consequences are too serious for 'fun and games'. Even in contract negotiations, we need to work together with the Board and administration to live up to the educational goals we all pay lip service to.

To enhance this co-operation and to avoid war games turning to actual wars, I would make some suggestions.

1. Dispense as much as possible with the 'Us' against 'Them' mentality. The real danger in playing up these polarities is that they intensify and feelings of anger and distrust on both sides escalate. Anyone who has watched this provincial government in action knows what happens when extreme positions are taken by one side: the other side reacts and the reactions - not the issues - take precedence. I don't know if the administration or the Board deliberately set out to provoke the Association (although I thought so when I first read their proposals). The provocation was produced by a kind of insensitivity to language and to the feelings of people who spend much of their lives working for this institution. Of course, 'Us' versus 'Them' can't be avoided entirely because the administration, hamstrung by the government, has a tight budget and College Board interests to maintain. But their

Contract Chair's Report (Contd.)

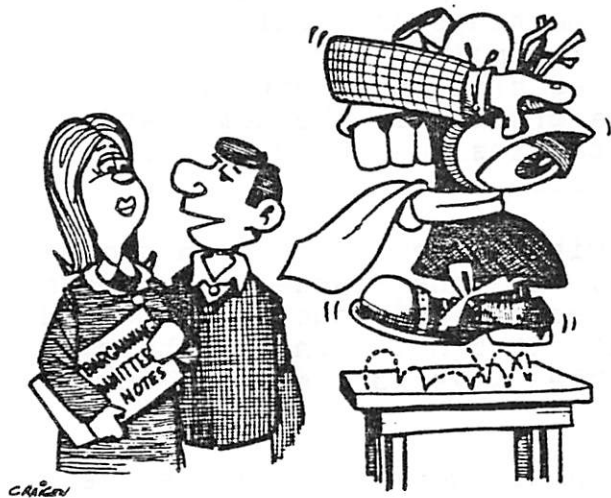
requests could be packaged in less inflammatory language, and with a prevailing trust in the workers to operate in the interests of the College and the students, as well as in their own self-interest.

2. Only bring to the bargaining table real concerns which one is willing to discuss. The 'throw-aways' are a waste of everyone's time. We spent hours researching and debating points which the College team had not themselves researched and were unwilling to devote time and energy to.
3. Provide more opportunities for discussion of management and union problems away from the bargaining table - and listen to the problems. Where are the faculty meetings of yesteryear? All we seem to have are brief 'announcement' meetings at which Dr. Moore and occasionally others give out information. Three such meetings on workload did occur last fall; frustratingly, they seemed to have no effect on negotiations. Often, the only forum for airing a problem is the negotiations table, where both parties must be wary of protecting their interests.
4. More creativity is needed on both sides. Hammering away at the issue from two opposing viewpoints becomes unproductive - and after seeing that it's not going anywhere, some new and flexible ways of seeing ought to be applied.
5. Both sides should work to gather and exchange as much information as possible so that everyone focusing on an issue has the facts at his disposal. This doesn't insure agreement, but it certainly saves misunderstanding.
6. Perhaps for our college, arbitration should be considered - not as a means of avoiding bargaining, but as a means of settling when job action appears imminent.

Contract Chair's Report (Contd.)

It's good that the College is considering changing negotiators next year. This change alone may signal a move to a less confrontational style. Besides, anyone in such a pressured situation tends to become trapped in the mold he knows. This is an excellent opportunity to consider new models for bargaining - ones more appropriate to our own institution.

Virginia Cooke



"He's trying to explain the board's position."

MORE EXCELLENCE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

From Jack Finnbogason's presentation at a Humanities Institute forum organized by the Douglas/Kwantlen Action Committee on Education.

Proposed funding for colleges and institutes for 1986-87:

A.B.E. reduced by 105 FTEs (on a base of 6,800)

U.T. increased by 14 FTEs (on a base of 11,900)

Health reduced by .66 FTEs (on a base of 3,500)

Business reduced by 100 FTEs (on a base of 10,250)

Natural Resources reduced by .7 FTEs (on a base of 1,070)

Engineering reduced by 135 FTEs (on a base of 2,400)

Electronics increased by 108 FTEs (on a base of 2,000)

Visual Arts increased by .156 FTEs

Hospitality/Tourism increased by 132 FTEs (on a base of 1,500)

Social Services/Criminology reduced by 8 FTEs

Vocational Trades reduced by 275 FTEs

UNIVERSITIES LIMIT TRANSFERS FROM COLLEGES

UBC has recently limited the number of transfer admissions to second year Faculty of Arts programmes to 450 students. (There were 500 admissions in 1985-86.) Transfers to second and third years combined will be limited to 750 admissions. (There were 749 in 1985-86.)

Now, SFU is making a similar if more subtle move. On June 2, the SFU Board of Governors will vote on a proposal to assign students' registration priority on the basis of a combination of the student's number of credit hours and grade point average. (Currently, only number of credit hours is considered.) Obviously, it is important to have a good registration priority in order to register for courses in popular programmes.

The kicker for community college students transferring to SFU is that they will automatically be assigned a grade point average of 2.0.

The message seems to be that if you want to register for a popular program, you had better go to SFU in the first place and not dally at a community college.

SFU students circulated a petition objecting to the proposal.

SOMETIMES THEY ARE ON OUR SIDE

Though it is often difficult to tell from down in the trenches, it appears that sometimes our administrators are willing to sally forth on our behalf. Following are excerpts from The Vancouver Sun, May 16, 1986.

The presidents of B.C.'s colleges say they're having to struggle to build solid schools on financial "quicksand."

Four years of B.C. government restraint, they say, have led to faculty layoffs, deteriorating buildings, chopped programs, salary freezes and thousands of qualified students being turned away.

The resignation [May 15th] of Malaspina College president Bruce Fraser over financing shortages, is the most dramatic move in a year that has already seen college presidents take a collective stand for their institutions.

In a rare gesture less than two months ago, the heads of B.C.'s 19 colleges and institutes wrote a letter to Post-secondary Education Minister Russ Fraser pleading for an end to budget cuts.

Victoria-appointed college board members have publicly remained closed-mouthed about cutbacks. But the presidents wrote that they wanted an end to cuts after years of rigorously following Victoria's directives to increase "productivity."

The presidents said in recent interviews with The Sun that, in addition to increasing the number of classes each faculty member had to teach, they have cut administrative corners, laid off staff, reduced offerings in liberal arts, science and vocational programs and squeezed more students into increasingly crowded classrooms.

Prior to the announcement of his resignation, Fraser said: "We (college presidents) don't have a tradition of grandstanding. But we've got to point out that we're in danger of doing down the tube."

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And Fraser Valley College president Barry Moore and [Douglas College president Bill] Day cited a new dilemma: a recent six-per-cent drop in financing for vocational training from Employment and Immigration Canada. That has already led to Vancouver Vocational Institute cutting part-time courses.

While B.C. has endured reductions, Alberta colleges have received hikes of more than five per cent for two years running, said John Waters, president of the College-Institute Educators Association.

One thing the presidents feared before the minister decided to top up colleges' declining operating budget was that he would use extra money from the Fund for Excellence to finance new programs.

"The intent of the excellence fund is to promote development," Fraser said, "but that's impossible to achieve unless you have the appropriate base. You can't build a strong structure on quicksand."

Vancouver Community College president Paul Gallagher said, "The quality of what we do is at peril" if base funding does not remain adequate and stable."

B.C. COURT UPHOLDS USE OF UNION DUES FOR POLITICAL CAUSES

From the Globe and Mail, May 12, 1986

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not bar unions from using members' dues to support political parties and social causes, the B.C. Supreme Court has decided.

The Court was ruling in the case of Charles Baldwin, a jail guard in Burnaby who must, by law, pay dues to the BCGEU. Baldwin said his Charter rights were being infringed any time the union spent money for purposes other than collective bargaining.

But in a judgment handed down Friday, Mr. Justice Albert Mackoff said the Charter cannot be used to control how a union spends its money. The spending "is the activity of a private organization to which the Charter does not apply," the ruling says.

The judgment is significant because it is the first judicial word on the use of compulsory dues for such purposes as support of the New Democratic Party, the peace movement or abortion rights groups.

The ruling will probably have an influence on other similar cases in the courts, the most well-known of which is an Ontario Charter case launched by Mervyn Lavigne, a Northern Ontario community college teacher. . . .

But the court ruling said the Charter does not apply because the provincial law does not regulate how the union spends the money.

"Such expenditure are made by the union executive, democratically elected by the members and in accordance with the BCGEU constitution," Judge Mackoff wrote. "There is here no governmental action involved in the use of the dues by the union."

BRIDGING CLAUSES REPAIRED?

from the Vancouver Sun, May 27, 1986

Justice Kenneth Meredith set out a series of questions that could spell the end of the construction industry's attempt to lure locked-out union tradesmen back to work at reduced wages and changed conditions.

The judgment is also - potentially - good news for other unions, especially those already hit by what has become a powerful new management weapon.

Meredith found that the board erred last fall when it upheld two previous decisions giving Paccar of Canada Ltd. and B.C. Hydro the right to change conditions after contract expiry.

Justice Meredith said proposed changes to employment conditions - for instance, a \$4 per hour wage cut proposed by the Construction Labour Relations Association - must be considered to be an "offer" to employees. Meredith then requested that the LRB assess whether such offers are proper under the B.C. Labour Code.

Lawyers for the unions involved had argued that such offers are improper under the code, which gives trade unions sole bargaining rights.

The B.C. Building Trades Council has complained to the LRB that the employer is guilty of violating three sections of the labour Code and has applied for an interim order that the CLRA ceases and desist from communicating with union employees in an attempt to circumvent the bargaining council.

DESIGNING OUR OWN FUTURE

The B.C. Federation of Labour, B.C. Teachers' Federation, Labour Canada, Pacific Group for Policy Alternatives, and the SFU Labour Studies Program recently held a conference on the new technologies. Here are some excerpts from reports on the conference:

from April 1986 New Democrat

Vincent Mosco, a sociologist from Queen's University, warned of what he calls the "pay-per society".

"Unless we act to control the new technology, those who do will use it to increase class divisions, erode civil and human rights and take us to the edge of nuclear war," he said.

...the 'pay-per' society is derived from the ability of micro-technology to measure and monitor single electronic transactions in the workplace and the home. This allows the packing of information into marketable commodities, and enables large corporations to target and extend control over workers and consumers.

For example, 'pay-per-call' refers to the telephone company's ability to introduce 'local measured service' which charges individuals and small business by the call (including length), instead of a flat fee. Increased profit margins then subsidize attractive deals to large corporations that have the clout to demand cheaper service....as a result as many as 400,000 poor and elderly people in Ontario and Quebec could lose access to their phone because of higher rates.

Using electronic monitors, phone company management is now able to document over 60 activities performed by its operators on the job, including trips to the washroom. Subjected to similar surveillance and control are secretaries (pay-per keystroke), checkout clerks, and, increasingly, production workers.

Mosco quotes the chairman of Bell Canada as stating recently, "I have no stress. I impose stress on others."...

Deskilling

According to Mosco, those who control the new technology also use it to slash labour costs by eliminating jobs or deskilling and cheapening their value... Automation in the telephone industry has eliminated thousands of jobs in North America, with no end in sight. Also feeling the brunt are banking, insurance, education and social services - that is, heretofore 'safe' white-collar or 'professional' jobs.

In deskilling, knowledge about the job is removed from workers until it becomes the exclusive province of the corporation and its technical elite.

David Noble, former Curator of Industrial Automation at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., states that the whole thrust of micro-technology becomes the design of machinery that can be worked by 'idiots', because 'idiots' don't get paid much.

The economic and political power of corporations is thereby enhanced because unemployment and deskilling mean that the influence of workers on the job and in the political process is diminished. Noble contends that often the only reason for the introduction of new technology is to increase control, irrespective of the economics. Mosco and Noble thus describe a society in which the growing gap between those who cannot read (33 per cent of U.S. adults) or afford the price of a phone, and a small technological elite, indicates the disappearance of the middle class and the entrenchment of a two-tier economy of haves and have-nots.

...Innovations in transportation and communications permit the transnational corporation to centralize control and transfer production wherever it can get the best deal. . . "Free trade" thus becomes a major component of corporate power and ideology. As UBC sociologist Pat Marchak quoted an American executive, "We understand the competition very well. It is us."

. . . Apple Computer slashes 20 per cent of its work force in the Silicon Valley and opens a manufacturing plant in Singapore. Singapore itself then imports Malaysian teenage women to produce the personal computer for export around the world.

This pattern of trade illustrates the naivete of the Bennett government's efforts to entice major high tech industries into B.C. . . .

The Political Environment

What would be the attitude to technology in a jurisdiction where political, trade union and business leaders, while fully aware of technology's potential, were determined to mitigate its negative effects? Where the social and economic costs of chronic joblessness are factored into productivity gains? Where full employment is explicit government policy?

In Sweden, such policy is the rule and an obvious success. They have a diversified economy, emphasize jobs, and make maximum use of technology, especially in the forest industry. . .

In Manitoba, \$500,000 out of a \$1.1 million productivity loan to Gravure Graphics is to be forgiven if the company increases employment by 33% by 1990. . . Often, it is government tax concessions and 'incentives' which are used to replace people with machines. . . Manitoba's proposal that job-creation be a condition for tax concessions was vetoed by the three conservative western governments in a conference last summer.

from the Douglas & Kwantlen Faculty Association Newsletter

Ellen Godfrey (an ex-history instructor) and her husband own and run a software development and debugging service for large companies. They have 25 employees who do their work on the client's software via modem from their Victoria offices. Ellen outlined what her firm needs to survive: first was good universities. She stated that she cannot hire people by resume and interview alone; she depends on recommendations from people at the universities, since her business relies so heavily on the trust required to maintain the secrecy of their techniques. The Socred's treatment of B.C.'s universities, which has contributed to the resignation of three of her best contacts from U.Vic., may drive her firm to relocate in Toronto.

Her best employees have been people with M.A.'s in Literature, not the high-tech fields; she postulated that people who pursue studies in less-popular fields are more motivated to begin with, and also benefit from the more intense discussions possible in smaller classes. The best predictor of an employee's success in her company, she says, is the books he or she has read in the last month.

B. C. FED ON THE PROWL AGAIN?

You may have already seen the first paragraph of this article quoted in the media. It is by Cliff Andstein of BCGEU who is now Secretary-Treasurer of the B.C. Federation of Labour. Sounds like the Fed is out to make trouble again. You might appreciate seeing the quote in context - this fearless reporter reads beyond the first paragraph - excerpted from the article in the April/May 1986, New Directions.

Bit, by bit, Capital and Government are tearing up the social contract that guides labour relations in Canada. The big question now is how Labour should respond. The old social contract was won by militant action, much of it outside the existing legal framework. Such tactics may be needed again.

If you try to locate a written copy of this "contract," there isn't one to be found, for the agreement was never fully formalized or reduced to writing. Nonetheless, in Canada as in other western capitalist democracies, its terms generally came to be accepted for four decades by labour, capital, the state and the public at large.

The Canadian social contract established in the 1940s provides for union certification procedures, unfair labour practice complaints, and requirements that union and employers bargain in good faith. In the economically expansive post-war period, the social contract also came to include real increases in direct wages. The government became committed to a "full employment" policy. And a social wage - public goods and services, unemployment insurance, pensions, social assistance, etc. - became part of the deal.

In return unions gave up the right to engage in recognition strikes and also the right to strike during a collective agreement. More fundamentally, they agreed in effect to management's right to control the productive process.

Thus the social contract required the labour movement to give up independence of action in some areas and not to challenge the dominant role of capital. In exchange, Labour received certain guarantees: freedom to organize, to bargain collectively and to strike for a collective agreement.

These guarantees have now been either removed or substantially weakened by the other two parties to the agreement: the State and Capital. . .

The struggle in British Columbia is particularly intense with amendment to labour legislation, back-to-work laws, Labour Relations Board decisions, court orders and economic weapons all being used against unions. . .

Canadian governments have never attempted to outlaw capital strikes: capitalists are totally free to withhold or withdraw investment until their demands are met. But they have increasingly moved to outlaw strikes by workers, preventing them from withholding or withdrawing their labour. During the 20 year period 1951 to 1970, there were 13 back-to-work orders in Canada, 9 provincial and 4 federal. But during the five year period from 1971 to 1975 there were 15 orders (11 provincial and 4 federal). And in only the three year period from 1976 to 1978 there were 19 back to work orders (13 provincial and 6 federal). . .

When the British Columbia government intensified its attack on the rights of workers and their unions in 1982, with the introduction of wage controls, it was continuing a pattern firmly established over the previous five years. Between 1976 and 1981 the Socred government had introduced 14 pieces of anti-labour legislation. These laws were used to: abolish unions through legal decertification [at Notre Dame University, e.g. - editor], prevent certain workers from belonging to unions [university teachers, e.g. - editor], break strikes, make organizing the unorganized more difficult, and involve the courts in labour disputes.

Initially introduced to give the government a club in negotiations with its own employees in the Government Employees Union, the Compensation Stabilization Act (CSP) was used on other targets as well. Following a 13 week strike in 1981, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Vancouver Municipal Employees Union had made great strides toward completely equal pay for work of equal value. But wage controls eliminated that possibility. Also under attack was the independent arbitration system used in teacher bargaining.

. . . The 1983 amendments to the CSP . . . set the range of permissible wage increases from minus five to plus five per cent. The primary criterion became the employer's ability to pay, not what a job might be worth in the labour market. . .

Also included in the July 1986 package of legislation was the aptly named Public Sector Restraint Act (presumably aimed at restraining public sector workers from defending their rights). This act currently required each public sector agreement, each time it is renegotiated, to be submitted to the CSP Commissioner so that the layoff and recall clause can be approved.

If the collective agreement is not exempted from the Act, the employer can terminate employees without regard to seniority. . .

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Most collective agreements contain a "bridging" clause so that the agreement remains in effect after the negotiated expiry date, at least as long as collective bargaining continues.

In B.C. the Labour Relations Board recently ruled that if bargaining is broken off by either party, once a collective agreement has expired an employer can unilaterally change the agreement by implementing terms and conditions of employment which it had tabled but which the union had refused to accept. The LRB generously required the employer to "bargain in good faith" over its concession demands before breaking off negotiations and implementing them!

The implications of this ruling were made clear in 1984 when employers in Alberta undertook a successful campaign to deunionize the construction industry by negating bridging clauses. Once the agreement expired, the companies instituted 24 hour lockouts which terminated the collective agreement. After the lockout they implemented lower wage rates, reduced other benefits and offered employment to those who would work under those conditions. Those who would not were reported to the Unemployment Insurance Commission by the companies and denied UIC benefits. Most construction in that province is now non-union.

This strategy has been adopted by the construction industry in its current negotiations with the building trades. The Construction Labour Relations Association has given notice to the Building Trades Bargains Council that, if a settlement is not reached by the expiry of the collective agreement at the end of April 1986, the CLRA reserves the right unilaterally to amend the wages and other conditions of employment in line with the concessions it has tabled.

A similar position has been taken by BC Hydro in the current negotiations with the five unions representing its workers.

[The CLRA has proceeded with this strategy. See BRIDGING CLAUSES REPAIRED? story elsewhere in this newsletter.]

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In the years following 1939 the Canadian economy had seen rapid productivity growth, which allowed for increases in real wages. U.S. domination of world commodity markets, foreign investment and the international monetary system combined with a strong demand for Canadian raw materials further strengthened the Canadian economy.

The social contract became possible because of worker militancy and because capital could afford and accommodate it.

The direct attack on the labour movement and Labour's gains of the past forty years is only one aspect of the social contract being abandoned by capital and the state. Full employment is no longer a policy objective of any government in Canada. The social wage, health, education, social assistance, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, recreation and culture, human and civil rights, environmental concerns, and worker safety are all at risk under the club of "restraint".

Meanwhile, the labour movement has become too legalistic, too dependent on legislation in defending itself. Forty years of operating within a legal framework has caused much of the movement to forget that government intervention on our behalf occurred because union and workers were willing to operate outside the legal framework, to defy existing laws, to carry out strikes when necessary (legal or illegal) and to go to jail if needed. Even in the sixties and

seventies, federal and provincial government workers finally obtained collective bargaining rights only after strikes in defiance of law, rallies, protests and political organizing.

As we develop our response we must redefine the parameters of the debate. Currently, capital has succeeded in charting the economic consensus. Notwithstanding that capital is in crisis and has "failed to deliver the goods" for the past two decades, notwithstanding that the deal forty years ago gave businesses the unchallenged right to extract profits, allocate resources, set up and shut down enterprises, hire and layoff workers, invest and dis-invest, and move to other countries and markets without restriction - the blame for the current crisis is being laid at the feet of labour, the unemployed, the poor, racial minorities and the disadvantaged. From this flows the attack on unions, income transfer payment, human rights and equity legislation as well as "restraint" programmes directed at reducing the social wage.

We must fight to restore the legislative and economic rights gained since the forties. But at the same time we must be prepared and be working to go beyond the limits of the post-war agreement.

A LITTLE LABOUR HISTORY

1920-1929: In the "Canadian Labour Revolt" of 1919, working people demonstrated their militancy in a series of general strikes and demonstrations across Canada, including a general strike in Vancouver in support of the more famous Winnipeg general strike. The "revolt" was crushed by the authorities, and the depression of the early 1920's wiped out many of the wartime gains for workers. Wages were rolled back, unions were smashed, the numbers of the unemployed rose.

These struggles produced splits in the ranks of organized labour. Many Vancouver trade unions joined the One Big Union (OBU) which sought to organize workers by industry. The older Trades and Labour Congress of Canada fought back, leaving a divided and weakened union movement. Political splits also plagued the labour movement, with socialist, communist and independent labour supporters at odds.

1930-1939: The "dirty thirties" brought hardship and struggle to working people. Unemployed single people were not eligible for relief; men were forced into relief camps or rode the rails, women sought work as domestics.

In April 1935, a contingent of relief camp workers, who had left the "20 cents a day" slave-like conditions of the camps to demand "Work and Wages", began the famous On to Ottawa Trek, which ended on July 1st when police attacked the trekkers in Regina.

MAY

May 1: INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY

May 2, 1910: First B.C. Federation of Labour founded.

May 5, 1906: Industrial Workers of the World - the "Wobblies" - obtain first Canadian charter.

May 6, 1966: Vancouver civic workers begin successful strike for 40 cents per hour wage increase.

May 8, 1984: Workers protest MacMillan Bloedel exporting raw logs.

May 11, 1938: Unemployed occupy art gallery, post office, Georgia Hotel in Vancouver.

May 13, 1932: Relief Act establishes Relief Camps for single, unemployed men.

May 15, 1946: IWA workers strike successfully for 40 hour week.

May 16, 1984: Socred government restrict union rights, bans secondary pickets.

JUNE

June 3, 1935: On-To-Ottawa Trek begins in Vancouver.

June 10, 1944: Control of Employment of Children Act bans child labour in some industries.

June 12, 1903: Women laundryworkers strike for union security.

June 13, 1919: Vancouver General Strike in support of Winnipeg strikers.

June 14, 1919: Telephone operators join Vancouver General Strike.

June 15, 1984: Independent Canadian Transit Union locked out after long 'unstrike.'

June 17, 1958: 18 workers killed as Second Narrows Bridge collapses while under construction.

June 18, 1935: Police battle 1,000 locked out Longshoremen in Vancouver, leaving one dead.

June 19, 1938: Police use tear gas and clubs to evict Sitdowners from Vancouver Post Office.

June 21, 1902: Trade Union Act ends union liability for damages due to strikes.

- from Centennial Labour History Calendar